A Special Report

Helping Parishes Where They Need it Most

At General Synod in August a motion was passed which greatly encouraged many people who have long prayed and worked for a greater commitment by the Australian Church to evangelism. This motion affirmed:

"That, in view of the rapid increase in the number of Australians who have rejected any Christian affiliation, this General Synod affirms that evangelism is now the primary task of this Church; and it calls upon

(a) the dioceses to provide resources for the training of lay people in ways of communicating their faith;

(b) the parishes to see themselves as the place from which evangelism is launched and in which nurture is given to new Christians;

(c) the members of this Church to be open with each other and with those outside the Church about their faith and its meaning in their lives;

(d) the clergy to intensify their spiritual ministry to their congregation to encourage a deeper personal commitment to Christ and to the spread of his Gospel."

Good! But where do we start? Over the past few years an increasing number of parishes have found help to begin tackling these tasks through the use of a "Parish Life-Style Workshop". The "Parish Life-Style Workshop" concept developed when a number of parishes considered having Parish Missions.

The "Parish Life-Style Workshop" concept developed when a number of parishes considered having Parish Missions. They were asked by the invited Missioners to first examine whether it was really possible for their parish to "be at Mission". Would a week of Mission, as they envisage it, really be beneficial in the long run to the cause of Christ in their district. Above all they were challenged to reconsider the apparent attitude that Mission was something that you do for a week or two and is usually done mainly by people from outside the parish.

Instead of providing Missioners we offered to provide a consulting ministry to give their parishes guidance in exploring every aspect of parish life that supposedly relates to Mission and to provide educational and motivational help towards the development of local ministry and mission. In every case two obvious facts emerged:

Firstly, that at every level of parish life there is ignorance and confusion about why parishes exist. In particular, there is a confusion between the task God has given the Church and the "tools" that He has given the local congregation with which to do the job. In too many places the means have become an end in themselves.

Secondly, that parishes generally lack the necessary foundation upon which effective mission can be built. *That is, a realistic fellowship life in which people are built up, provide each other with mutual support, and are effectively motivated and equipped for individual ministry in their daily lives.* Some people call this "Body Life" - the building up and maintaining the Church in its function as the Body of Christ in the world.

With great reluctance we have come to accept that Ray Steadman in his book "Body Life") aptly describes the situation facing many Anglican Parishes today.

"Great damage has been done by unhealthy saints attempting to reach out to the world in evangelism or social help in spasms of dedicated zeal, but without true spiritual health. Burdened with unsolved problems in their own lives, and unconsciously displaying unresolved hypocrisies of prejudice and outlook, their spasmodic activities in evangelism or help seem to be but hollow mockeries of Christianity in the eyes of those they hope to reach. Their own Christian meetings have often turned into dull, stodgy rituals where many Christians gather to go through predictable performances, all conducted in an atmosphere which permits no interchange with one another, no exchange of thought, no discussion of truth, and no opportunity to display Christian love in any but the most superficial of ways. What is terribly missing is the experience of "body life"; that warm fellowship of Christians with Christian the New Testament calls "Koinonia", and which was an essential part of early Christianity."

Out of this awareness came the first "Mission Workshops" (later renamed "Parish Life-Style Workshops"). They were seen as "Step One" in helping parishes to accept the problem as their own responsibility; and to see outsiders, such as our Church Army Consultant-Missioners as being there to provide help and guidelines that would enable them to explore their values as a Parish and as individual Christians.

We are aware that change towards effective Mission will only come about through the type of parish education that not only communicates information, but also challenges the wrong values, presently held, that cause the problem. For this reason we accept that the primary task of workshop activities should be to help parishes to realise what their present values are in relation to Mission and to clarify them in relation to the values demanded of us by our Lord and expressed in the life-style of the New Testament Church in its Mission.

Over the four years that we have been developing the Workshop approach we have probably learnt more than the people we've worked with. The workshop programmes have changed and grown as we have become more and more convinced that in this way we are offering the Church help where it needs it most.

The stated objectives of a Parish Life-Style Workshop Are:

(a) To help those taking part to understand and appreciate the Mission of the Church as "the Body of Christ."

(b) To help parishioners, particularly key decision makers and people involved in various aspects of direct ministry (e.g. Pastoral Care Visitors, Sunday School Teachers, Youth Leaders etc.), to clarify the relationship between what the local Church presently is and what it needs to become to effectively be the Body of Christ in their particular district.

(c) To explore together the possible alternatives that are open to a parish like their own, what such change would involve, cost and possibly result in.

Motivating, Modelling and Enabling

How does a Church Army Officer in a parish situation work out his or her vocation as an evangelist?

In January Sister Lyn Bullard commenced work in the parish of Coff's Harbour in the Diocese of Grafton. Lyn was invited to be part of a team ministry and to be responsible for areas of parish life relating to evangelistic outreach, children and youth work. Lyn's contract also allows her to be away from the parish for up to three months each year to exercise a wider ministry in Parish Missions, Youth Camps, Laity Training and Child Evangelism.

In the article that follows, Lyn outlines the areas of ministry for which she is responsible and what she aims to achieve in each part of her work. This was originally prepared in response to questions about the nature of her work and to encourage informed prayer support for each area of ministry. Those of us who have recently visited her on the job or worked with her in evangelistic campaigns are very conscious that her aims are being fulfilled.

My ministry is divided into twelve related areas of activity: Children's Ministry; C.E.B.S. and G.F.S.; Sunday School; Messengers; Youth Ministry; Ministry to 20-35 Year Olds; Christian Education; Preaching and Assisting in Sunday Services; Evangelism; Counselling; Camps and Outreach Activities; and Church Army Missions.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Presently this involves visiting parents of children; having sharing sessions with groups of parents on Christian family life and upbringing. I counsel parents and/or children at their request. I will be running children's camps and mission follow up among children.
My Immediate Aim: To get parents to take up their responsibility in nurturing their children in Christ. To build up families.

C.E.B.S. AND G.F.S. (8-14 year olds).
These groups are run under local leaders with their own structures and programme. I speak to them and help with activities only at the invitation of leaders. I encourage and help wherever I can. This involves going on G.F.S. camps from time to time.
My Immediate Aim: To contribute to the preparation and equipping of young people for the pressures of teenage maturity.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: (3-8 year olds).
Two Senior Youth Group members run this programme under my teaching and guidance, providing songs, stories, games and activity work.
My Immediate Aim: To introduce little ones to Jesus and convince them of His love for them that they might eventually arrive at a commitment to Christ.

MESSENGERS: (9-13 year olds).
This group meets for games, fellowship, spiritual growth and learning how to present Christ through drama, song and dance. It involves two to three hours each Sunday afternoon, availability to contribute to worship services and wider travel in outreach activities.
My Immediate Aim: To develop an effective ministry in which children and

WE DEPEND ON YOU!

This is no mere cliche. The future of the Church Army - the extent of its work and the help it can give the Church - are completely determined by the extent our supporters give in response to our appeals for help.

Several diocese give us an annual donation. A number of parishes make an allocation towards our work. We are very appreciative of their partnership with us and what their support makes possible. However the bulk of our income comes from the direct support of our Associates, Friends, Life Members and readers of "The Pioneer".

Your giving particularly allows us to go on training future Officers. It enables our Missioners to be available on the basis of need rather than just where money is available to pay for help. Because of it the staff of our Federal Office provide supportive ministry to our field workers and help is available to parishes wanting to train laity or develop an evangelistic programme.

It was in response to appeals through "The Pioneer", that money was available to establish our Bookshop at Newcastle, provide Mission Caravans in rural and outback areas, organise Welfare Huts for the troops during the war, train the first Australian Aborigines for full-time ministry, pioneer the Buttery's ministry to drug affected young people, maintain our Aerial Ministry and develop new ways of helping parishs to effectively tackle their Mission as the Church.

Indeed, so close is the relationship between your direct giving in response to our appeals, and the effectiveness of our work, it actually determines the present and future of our Society.

When giving has dropped back or failed to keep up with inflation we have had to put off staff and pull out of important work. When giving increases we are able to tackle neglected areas of ministry and pioneer new work in among people and places presently unreached by the Church.

Will you consider afresh the staggering implications of this vital relationship between your donations and the work of the Kingdom.

We are called to do what we are doing better than we do it - we can't because our budget limits us.

We are called to tackle new tasks that the Church in Australia has long neglected - but we can't even consider doing so without a tremendous increase in our income.

So we really are depending on you! Please give us the increased and consistent support we need.

enjoy the performance. They are members of the orchestra. Each has a part to play, and the minister is the conductor who helps each to fit in, as the whole orchestra presents a glorious symphony of praise to Christ.

Nor is all this a new concept. Just on one hundred years ago, Wilson Carlile had this vision in the founding of the Church Army. He once remarked:

"God has called me to cast out the dumb spirit from the pews of the Church of England."

The whole structure and emphasis in the course of training offered to the men and women training to be full-time Evangelists with the Church Army is shaped by a firm commitment to this biblical concept of ministry.

The College of Evangelism sees itself as preparing our students for three different aspects of ministry.

Firstly, the effective Evangelist must be a "Catalyst". A person who endeavours to get the Church to understand what Evangelism is all about and get on with the job. The presence and ministry activity of a person affirmed by the Church as an Evangelist should serve as a constant reminder to the local church of the place and importance of this aspect of mission. To this end we are endeavouring to equip our Officers to clearly understand not only how to evangelise, but also to have a clear grasp of the principles of mission that underly such ministry and to be able to effectively communicate to others the place of evangelistic activity in the overall mission of the Church.

Secondly, the effective Evangelist must be a "Model" to the congregation. His or her ministry, be it person to person, through preaching, teaching, or in relational group work, must continually show the congregation that effective ministry *can* be carried out, and, at the same time, demonstrate ways and means by which others can lead people to respond more fully to Christ.

Thirdly, the effective Evangelist must endeavour to develop the gifts of the congregation, training people for ministry, providing them with biblical insight into the implications of the Gospel and enabling them to be more effective communicators. Such work demands not only expertese as evangelists, but also effective sensitivity and skills in the areas of education, pastoral care and group dynamics.

In most cases the average evangelist, while working at some time in all three areas, will have gifts and capabilities that will fit him or her to particularly work in one aspect of evangelism.

Our Parish Life-style workshops are especially designed to help people to understand Mission and to motivate individuals to accept their own ministry responsibility. One thinks also of various times when Church Army Evangelists have pioneered areas of ministry in such a way that has eventually led the Church to accept its responsibility in some neglected aspect of mission, e.g. the use of aborigines in full-time ministry and work among people of alternate-culture.

The major ministry of most Officers has surely been that of showing people that evangelism *can* be done and destroying the myth that it is beyond the average parishioners' capability to lead their friends and neighbours to Christ. I think especially of the quiet faithful ministry of Sister Campbell

The three Church Army Officers flew into Townsville all the way from Sydney in the Army's own Cessna 172 Skyhawk, bought brand-new four years ago by a wealthy fan of the Army and made available to it for three years. Last year the Church Army took over full ownership of the plane, and now uses it in all States of Australia. Captain Cullen is the pilot, who says; "We take it everywhere. We've been into Queensland before, and I've taken it to Tasmania several times. "Coming up here we wouldn't dream of taking a commercial flight. That's what our aircraft is for!"

Arthur and Colleen Malcolm.

At the moment Western Australia and the Northern Territory have no Church Army representatives, but Captain Page said, that was hoped to change next year. In North Queensland, the Church Army has two active field Officers, one in Yarrabah, (Captain Arthur Malcolm), and one on Palm Island, (Captain Norman Polgen).

"We've come north for three reasons," Captain Page said yesterday. "Firstly we wanted to visit our Officers in the North Queensland Diocese, and secondly to do some deputation work up here, in other words tell people about ourselves. We are a small society in a big country. A lot of people don't know we even exist. And thirdly, we will conduct some training sessions in evangelism. We are hoping some young people may respond, we have a lot of openings and opportunities and we certainly need more candidates."

The first training session took place at St. Matthew's Parish Centre in Rising Sun last night, the second one will follow on Wednesday night at 7.30 and a third on Thursday night, also at 7.30. This session will be repeated on Saturday night.

Captain Page is not exaggerating when he says that he could do with some more recruits. The Church Army has presently 24 active officers in Australia, all of them on the Eastern Seaboard, with another 11 training at the College of Evangelism in Sydney.

"I am not pessimistic about the Christian Church, either here in Australia or overseas," Captain Page said. "A lot of people seem to think Christianity is becoming less relevant to modern society, but I don't agree. "I think there are terrific opportunities for the Church in general, or evangelistic work here in Australia." In fact the Church Army in Australia has, to some extent, remained closer to the original objective than its parent organisation in Britain. It still tends to concentrate on the evangelistic side of its original brief, in contrast to the Church Army in Britain which is heavily involved in social welfare work. Even so, its often hard to say where evangelism stops and social welfare begins, as far as the Church Army is concerned, the two often overlap.

In Australia, it goes into new housing areas, children's homes, works with Aboriginals, provides industrial Chaplains, and apart from its evangelistic missions, conducts training classes for lay evangelists, runs youth camps and tries to assist crippled children, senior citizens, students, and people feeling isolated because they're living in remote areas. "The Church Army very much pioneered a lot of the welfare work in the United Kingdom, in some cases even before the Salvation Army," Captain Page said."

THE CHURCH ARMY IN AUSTRALIA

P.O. BOX 107, FRENCH'S FOREST. N.S.W. 2085

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THE WORLD WIDE CHURCH ARMY

The Church Army was founded in England in 1882, by Prebendary Wilson Carlile. It is a lay Society of men and women Evangelists of the Anglican Communion. Other autonomous Societies were founded in the U.S.A. in 1927, Canada, 1928, Australia 1934, New Zealand 1935, Eastern Africa 1962, Jamaica 1969. Officers from some of these Societies are also at work in Germany, South America, South Africa, Botswana and West Pakistan.

A New Board Member

We welcome the Venerable R.H. Goodhew as a new member of the Church Army Board. Earlier this year, Archdeacon Goodhew was appointed as Primate's Examiner to the Church Army College and made his initial visit to meet our students at Belrose.

Our new Board Member is presently Archdeacon of Wollongong and Camden. Prior to this appointment he had served the parishes of St.Michael's, Wollongong, Coorparoo (Dioc.of Brisbane), Carlingford, Ceduna(B.C.A.Parish in S.A.), Beverly Hills and Bondi.

We greatly value the expertese in administration, pastoral work and evangelism that he brings to the Board.

DAY 12. Captain David and Dianna Hinchliffe, Industrial Chaplaincy and Prison Ministry at Long Bay Gaol.

DAY 13. Captain John McKnight, Drug Counselling, Sydney. N.S.W. Pray also for plans being made to celebrate the Centenary of Church Army - founded in England 1882.

DAY 14. The Rev. Graeme and Jenny MacRobb, Church Army College of Evangelism. Pray also for the development of a Friendship Evangelism Training Programme being developed by the Society.

DAY 15. Captain Gilbert and Ruth Page - Federal Director of Church Army in Australia, Parish Missions, Training programmes in Evangelism.

DAY 16. Students at the Church Army College of Evangelism. The Honorary Lecturers.

DAY 17. The Rev. Captain Norman Polgen, Priest-Evangelist, Palm Island, Old. Pray also for an increased number of Aboriginal Christians to serve God in full time ministry.

DAY 18. Captain Doug Quayle, Industrial Evangelism (I.T.I.M. Sydney Area).

DAY 19. Captain Glen Scott, Youth Director, Grafton, N.S.W. and Manager of the Church Army Bookshop in Grafton.

DAY 20. Captain David Woodyard, Parish Evangelist, Morwell, Vic.

DAY 21. The Executive Board of the Church Army. For the planning Committees and our Staff Conference in January.

DAY 22. The Rev. Richard Gwilt, Prison Chaplain, Fremantle, W.A. and as Associate Evangelist of the Church Army.

DAY 23. Captain Mark Rogers moving this month to Dalby, Qld., to develop Youth and Children's Ministry in that area.

DAY 24. Captain Chris and Wendy Thiele, Youth Work and Children's Ministry, Parish of Penshurst.

DAY 25. Sister Jenny Thomson, Parish Evangelist, Sherwood, Qld.

DAY 26. The Church Army Societies throughout the world. Great Britain, the United States, Canada, West Indies and New Zealand.

DAY 27. Captain Neil and Judy Payne, Manager of the Church Army Bookshop.

DAY 28. Sister Carol Tokley, Parish Evangelist working in Lyons-Chifley Parish, A.C.T.

DAY 29. The Rev. Captain Arthur and Coleen Malcolm. Priest-Evangelist at Yarrabah Aboriginal Settlement, Qld.

DAY 30. Captain Brian and Barbara Mattinson, Administration and Staff Officer

DAY 31. The Retired Officers and wives. The Rev. and Mrs. Batley, Mrs. Fisk, Sister Phillpot, Sister Bacon, Sister Campbell and Sister Pritchard.